

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 33575 232156Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

SAM-01 /061 W

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R 232110Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6361

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMCONSUL MARSEILLES

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

AMCONSUL NICE

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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PAGE 02 PARIS 33575 232156Z

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 33575

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, FR, UR

SUBJECT: FRENCH COMMUNISTS TAKE SOVIETS TO TASK

SUMMARY: DECEMBER 11 PROJECTION OF A "CLANDESTINE FILM" ON FIRST NETWORK PURPORTING TO SHOW LIFE IN THE WORLD OF THE GULAG HAS LED TO FRENCH COMMUNIST (PCF) CONDEMNATIONS OF SOVIET TACTICS. QUARREL HAS POLITICAL POTENTIAL IMPORTANT IN FRANCE WHERE MANY VOTERS MIGHT WELCOME SIGNS STAGED THAT THE PCF IS WILLING TO ASSERT ITS INDEPENDENCE FROM MOSCOW. PRESS REACTIONS, WHICH HAS REFLECTED SUSPICIONS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A STAGED EVENT DESIGNED TO LEGITIMIZE PCF IN EYES OF FRENCH VOTERS, WAS ANGRILY CONDEMNED BY PARTY DAILY, L'HUMANITE. PCF MOVE WILL BE NOTED BY THOSE PARTICIPANTS IN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONFERENCE (ECPC) WHICH HAVE HITHERTO FOUND PCF UNCONVINCING IN ITS PROTESTATIONS AGAINST SOVIET LINE. END SUMMARY.

1. WHAT HAPPENED: DECEMBER 11 FIRST NETWORK EVENING NEWS SHOWED FILM PURPORTING TO DEPICT LIFE IN A SOVIET CONCENTRATION CAMP NEAR RIGA. ALLEGEDLY SMUGGLED OUT OF THE SOVIET UNION BY AN FRG TRAVELER, THE FILM HAD ALREADY BEEN SHOWN ON THE BBC. ON DECEMBER 12, PCF PUBLISHED COMMUNIQUE CALLING ON SOVIET AUTHORITIES TO DENY THE REALITY PORTRAYED IN THE FILM AND STATING THAT "IF THE REALITY CORRESPONDS TO THE IMAGES WHICH WERE TRANSMITTED, AND IF THIS IS NOT DENIED BY THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES, THE POLITBUREAU OF THE PCF WOULD EXPRESS ITS PROFOUND SURPRISE AND ITS MOST FORMAL CONDEMNATION." AFTER PRAVDA DENOUNCED THE FILM AS A FABRICATION, THE PCF GAVE LENGTHIER READING OF ITS POSITION: WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT THE FRENCH MONOPOLY HAS OFTEN SERVED AS A "PRIVILEGED INSTRUMENT" FOR ANTI-SOVIET CAMPAIGNS, THE PCF NOTED ITS OWN RECORD OF COMBATTING ANTI-SOVIETISM AND WENT ON TO SAY THAT

IT WOULD REFUSE TO SANCTION ANY "RECOURSE TO ADMINISTRATIVE MEANS AND REPRESSION" ATTEMPTING TO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PARIS 33575 232156Z

SUBSTITUTE FOR "THE DEMOCRATIC WAY OF SOCIALISM WHICH IMPLIES MASS POLITICAL STRUGGLE."

2. PRESS REACTION: CONSERVATIVE COMMENTATORS IN BOTH FIGARO AND LES ECHOES HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE ENTIRE QUARREL IS NOTHING MORE THAN A "PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATION TO CLEAR COMMUNIST PARTIES IN THE EYES OF PUBLIC OPINION." EVIDENTLY STUNG BY THIS POSITION,

L'HUMANITE OFFERED AN EDITORIAL RECALLING THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET UNION "IN THE DIFFICULT COMBAT FOR LIBERTY," DENOUNCING THE REPRESSIONS OF THE STALINIST ERA, AND GOING ON TO SAY THAT IT COULD NOT "GIVE BLINDLY ITS APPROVAL TO EVERYTHING WHICH GOES ON IN THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES." THE MAJOR POINT OF THE EDITORIAL COMES IN ITS STATEMENT THAT "FOR US, SOCIALISM IS EVER MORE LIBERTY FOR CITIZENS." L'HUMANITE CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT THE PCF WOULD CONTINUE TO COMBAT ANTI-SOVIETISM WHILE CONTINUING TO SPEAK OUT ON THE REALITIES OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES.

3. INTERNAL IMPLICATIONS: THE QUARREL BETWEEN THE SOVIET AND THE PCF, IF IT IS A REAL ONE, IS POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT IN FRANCE. THE PCF HAS LONG BEEN HANDICAPPED BY TOO CLOSE A POPULAR IDENTIFICATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION. WHILE EARLIER EXAMPLES OF PCF DISAPPROVAL OF SOVIET ACTIONS (MOST NOTABLY OVER THE INCARCERATION OF SOVIET PHYSICIST LEONID PLOUTCH) HAVE BEEN TREATED WITH A LARGE HO-HUM BY THE FRENCH PUBLIC, THIS MOST RECENT QUARREL RECEIVED WIDER ATTENTION. FOR THE TIME BEING, THE OTHER TWO MEMBERS OF THE UNITED LEFT AND THE OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES ARE KEEPING A WATCHFUL DISTANCE FROM THE EVENTS.

4. THE PCF'S "EUROPEAN ROAD": PCF PREPARATIONS FOR THE ECPC ARE AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN COMMUNIST REACTIONS. THE PCF HAS BEEN UNABLE TO AGREE WITH THE SOVIETS ON A DEFINITION OF THE CONFERENCE'S AIMS; RECENT PCF MANEUVERS APPEARED TO BE DESIGNED TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR A SOUTHERN EUROPEAN DEFINITION OF COMMUNIST RELATIONS WITH OTHER LEFT FORMATIONS (FOR EXAMPLE, SEE PARIS 30521 ON THE JOINT ITALIAN/FRENCH COMMUNIST DECLARATIONS). THE PCF  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 PARIS 33575 232156Z

IS SURELY AWARE THAT ITS INSISTENCE ON ITS INDEPENDENCE VIS-A-VIS MOSCOW WILL AID THIS CASE AND MAKE IT APPEAR AS THE DEFENDER OF A ROAD WHICH DOES NOT NECESSARILY LEAD TO MOSCOW.

5. COMMENT: IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO TELL IF THIS LATEST DUST-UP IN PCF/SOVIET RELATIONS REPRESENTS ANYTHING MORE THAN AN OPERATION DESIGNED TO REASSURE FRENCH VOTERS. IF THE PRAVDA/L'HUMANITE QUARREL IS PART OF A CONSPIRACY TO CONVINCE THE FRENCH OF THE PURITY OF THE PCF INTENTIONS, THAT CONSPIRACY HAS SO FAR BEEN HANDLED WITH UNUSUAL MALADROITNESS. HOWEVER, IF THE PCF CONTINUES ITS PUBLIC ATTACKS ON ASPECTS OF SOVIET INTERNAL POLICY, FRENCH OBSERVERS MAY CONCLUDE THAT THE PCF HAS MOUNTED NEW EFFORT TO DIMINISH ITS

IMAGE AS A FOLLOWER OF THE MOSCOW LINE.  
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**TAGS:** PINT, PGOV, FR, UR, PCF  
**To:** STATE  
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